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MALBONE, THE MINIATURE PAINTER.

NEARLY one hundred years have gone by since the most celebrated miniature painter that America has produced, first saw the light in Newport, Rhode Island. Edward G. Malbone, born in August, 1777, belonged to one of the aristocratic and wealthy families flourishing before the Revolution in that ancient seaport. None of his family now remain in their ancestral seats of pride and splendor, but a noble mansion of the olden time still rears its front on the main street in Newport, is still known as "Malbone House," and is replete with interesting memorials of colonial days, and of distinguished names of the Revolutionary era. This was the town residence of the proud Malbones a hundred years ago. Near Miantonomi Hill, a mile or two north of the town, the rocky citadel of the Indian chief who once ruled all this fair region, lay the country seat of the Malbones. It, too, was a lordly dwelling-place in its day, laid out in the formal fashion of geometric walks, and avenues hedged with clipped box in the taste of Watteau, where the stately colonial dames trod the sward in costumes which the present day almost repeats, and, with their attendant cavaliers in flowered satin waistcoats, beheld their radiant beauty mirrored in the still ornamental waters which gleamed amidst the dark green cedars. This country mansion, of corresponding elegance with the town house, was burned down during a dinner party before the Revolution; but there in its days of proud hospitality many a loyal toast had been drained to King George. Nor was the "beaker brimmed with costly wine" always consecrated to such lofty sentiment. The golden shield of the family had its dark side, and privateering, as well as the slave trade, had enhanced its fortunes, so that we may suppose a successful voyage to Africa was sometimes the wish to the wine cup. For more than half a century after the fire, until the late J. Prescott Hall of New York rebuilt and restored this noble seat, "Malbone's Garden" remained a ruin; an interesting memorial of colonial times, the favorite resort of young people on Sunday afternoons, and the chosen instance of the moralist, in whose view the dark and cruel traffic of the hundred years gone by had avenged itself, and swept away homes, lands, fortunes, and even the living name of the lordly family.

Sprung from a collateral branch of this main stem, Edward G. Malbone found, on entering into life at the end of the Revolution, that a change had come over the prosperity of his kindred, and had made his own fortunes of humble character. Inheriting the romantic traditions of his ancestry, with a natural love of beauty, he appears to have displayed his artistic traits at a very early age, while a genial temper made him a great favorite in society. At a time, too, in boyhood, when impressions are most readily made, the acquaintance and intimate friendship of another spirit of genius, Washington Allston, served to confirm his love for art. Allston was two years younger than Malbone, and was seven years of age when sent to Newport from South Carolina, for his health. He remained there ten years, during which time the friendship for Malbone, which only terminated with death, became one of the strongest attachment. Of nearly the same age, the two pure and charming characters developed into artist life, amidst the enchanting scenery of the beautiful island.

No spot in America presents a sweeter charm to the artist and the man of letters than Newport and its adjacent country, while the fascination of the place is perhaps least capable of expression by those who feel it most. From the time when honest Roger Williams landed at the little cove not far remote from the spot where "Malbone's Garden" grew in after days, to the summer of 1870, when the gentle and versatile Henry T. Tuckerman penned his last record of Newport's beauty, all distinguished men who ever touched its shore have borne witness to its loveliness. Long before the tidal wave of summer-fashion visited its coast, the isle of Rhode Island was a favorite resort, the chosen seat of literary culture. Almost a century and a half ago the pulpit of venerable Trinity Church resounded with the pious voice of the spiritual Berkeley; and the famous Dean has left in the farm-house he occupied, memories of that "heart affluence in discursive talk," which made him beloved in the society of Newport; while the Paradise Rocks, overlooking the ocean beach, ever recall the scene where his sublime spirit mused on the glories of a coming age, and with prophetic truth hailed in America a new "Star of Empire." With a climate of delicious coolness in the

height of summer, and tempered by the Gulf Stream in winter; with skies of Italian softness and beauty, and waters of translucent azure; rocky headlands, and romantic beaches; a picturesque and noble harbor, and with every pleasure of rural nature spread over its island, Newport has won the artist loves of Smibert, who came with good Dean Berkeley, Gilbert Stuart, Allston and Malbone, Staigg, King, the Hunts, and the Greenoughs, Ames, Thorndike, Mason, Key, Kensett, and many other noted painters. Cooper, Longfellow, and Mrs. Stowe have woven their romances from its golden threads of history; Ezra Styles, Dr. Hopkins, and Channing perpetuate its ministerial renown of old; Calvert, Brooks, Higginson, Kennedy, Curtis, Bret Harte, Kate Field, and Julia Ward Howe, have sketched many a picture of its natural beauties and delightful society.

Nurtured by such sweet influences, the youthful Malbone, in the companionship of Allston, became an artist. Earnest and patient, as well as inspired, everything that he did was most carefully finished, so that his drawing was strictly correct. In the romantic aspects of the island, and in the beauty of its women, lay the sources of his enthusiasm; and, at the earliest age, we learn that he often visited the beach to gather the whitest pebbles, which he called "paint stones," and pretty shells, which, decorated by his pencil, he hung around the necks of favorite school-girls. In no seaside haunt does female loveliness appear more winning than among the old native families of Newport. Outside of all the garish show of strangers in the fashionable season, the chivalric lover of true feminine grace may see on Sunday afternoons, emerging from worship in old Trinity Church, the sweetest buds of girlhood, with complexions of exquisite delicacy and faces of seraphic purity. And if his heart be won at sight, and he follow on to find their home, they will turn often, not toward the bustling hotel or lordly villa, but into some by-street in the olden town, and in some quaint court or garden be lost to view. They are the descendants of Malbone's beauties, and have been to the ancient temple where their ancestors have humbly worshiped, perhaps for eight generations.

As early as twelve years of age, Malbone painted scenes for the modest theatre of Newport, which then stood at the head of Long Wharf, and was erected from the designs of Peter Harrison, the builder of the classic Redwood Library, and who in England had been an assistant architect of Blenheim House, the magnificent pile which Britain's gratitude reared to Marlborough. Two of the old streets in Newport, adjacent to this theatre, recall by their names, Duke Street and Marlborough Street, the honors which the loyal town of Newport paid to the great chieftain. Malbone's art, however, rose superior to scene painting, and his miniatures and ideal heads having attracted the notice of the British Consul in Providence, he was induced by him to establish himself in that town, and at the early age of seventeen he went there, remaining about two years. A number of his finest works are in Providence, in possession of the Ives family and others, and are priceless. His drawing was perfect, his coloring beautiful, his likenesses most speaking types of their originals; and, to his female heads especially, he gave, without flattery, an indescribable charm, which now, eighty years after they were painted, fascinate the gazer, "with the mind, the music breathing from the face." Richard M. Staigg, doubtless the most successful miniature painter that America has produced, next to Malbone, made for many years the most careful study of his works, and copied a number of the choicest.

One now in Newport is the miniature of a historic character, Major John Handy, and is in the possession of his daughters, Misses Mary C. and Anne Handy. In 1776, when the Declaration of American Independence was promulgated, Major Handy read it from the balcony of the State House in Newport. Fifty years afterward, on July 4th, 1826, he had the sublime satisfaction of again reading the immortal instrument from the same stand, and his venerable figure, bowed with age, was beheld with reverence by the vast throng gathered in the square below.

In 1796 Malbone removed to Boston, where he remained some four years, painting a number of miniatures there and in the adjacent cities. The Sears, Erving, and Amory families of Boston, the Derbys of Salem, and other possessors, hold cherished specimens of his skill. There are also others belonging to the Bingham and Peterses of Philadelphia, and the Poors of Washington, and in fact a number of the Atlantic cities possess his works. It is, however, ex-

ceedingly difficult to obtain any catalogue of them. In many instances, through marriage, the names of the descendants of the originals have been changed, and are not readily traced, while the jealous care with which a prized miniature is always held makes these works rarely visible.

Two of Malbone's finest works are in Baltimore in the possession of Mrs. J. T. Heyward, and were painted during the last year of his life. They are the miniatures of Mr. and Mrs. James Heyward of South Carolina. The lady was Miss Shubrick, sister of Admiral Shubrick, and one of the most beautiful women of her time. These pictures were taken soon after marriage, and Mrs. Heyward's is in her bridal dress, with a veil and superb coronet of pearls. It is of the most elaborate and masterly finish, and of surpassing loveliness, in every way worthy of the great artist, and a meet companion for his "Hours." It is indeed well nigh impossible to depict in words the grace and fascination of this miniature, which requires an effort to cease looking upon. Many other examples of Malbone's art, painted in South Carolina, are to be found among the families of the Allstons, Pringles, Prioleaus, Hamiltons, Middletons, Pinckneys, Izards, Prestons, etc., or their connections and descendants.

Several of Malbone's pictures are in the possession of Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, of Boston. These include a miniature of his father, and one of his mother's uncle, Hon. James Bowdoin, U. S. Minister to Spain, and the benefactor to Bowdoin College. This gentleman was the son of Governor Bowdoin; and Malbone's miniature of him is a copy from a portrait by Stuart. Very few copied works by Malbone exist, and this is the only one in Boston. There was also a miniature painted of Mrs. Winthrop, but no one was satisfied with it, and it is not forthcoming at the present day. The Sears family possess a beautifully executed miniature of their father, the late Hon. David Sears, taken when he was a very young man. Mr. Sears was remarkably handsome, and retained his good looks through life. The picture is of striking beauty. Another fine miniature is of Hon. Thomas Russell, one of the old merchant princes of Boston, whose mansion was at Charlestown, just over the bridge which he was mainly instrumental in building.

Malbone, Allston, and Charles Fraser, of South Carolina, once painted under the same roof, as special friends and brothers in art, in Charleston. Fraser was an admirable miniature painter, though a lawyer by profession and practice. A gallery of his works was exhibited in his honor in Charleston, in 1857, a few years before his death.

In company with his beloved friend, Washington Allston, Malbone visited Charleston in 1800, being everywhere welcomed in that beautiful city, and painting a number of its most distinguished residents, as well as in Savannah. The next year the two artists sailed together for Europe; Malbone, however, remaining only a few months in London, where he devoted himself assiduously to his art. It was while residing here that he painted his celebrated ideal picture of "The Hours," the most exquisite and transcendent work of genius ever produced by an American artist. "The Hours" is a large-sized miniature on ivory, as were nearly all of Malbone's works. It represents three beautiful female figures—the Past, the Present, and the Future. The figure depicting the Present occupies the centre of the group, while the Past and the Future hold positions on either hand. The Past displays a vanishing profile, with an expression of tender grief; her story is told, her fate decided. Her touching sorrow is relieved by the Future, drawn in the act of peeping over the left shoulder of the central figure. In the happiest contrast to the spirit of the Past, the Future reveals a beaming, mischievous, tricky little sylph, with eyes and lips brimming with innocent fun and joyous expectation. So sweetly winning and cunning a glance must have been caught from one of the darlings of Malbone's youth. The ideal of the Present differs from either of the others. The face is turned full upon the spectator, with calm, serene, and holy resignation. It is the face and figure of full womanhood, the complexion of the fairest blonde, and with radiant beauty of mind and person enthroned on the eloquent brow, and shining from the deep blue seraphic eyes. All the accessories of this wonderful ideal, the indescribable loveliness of coloring, the grace of attitudes and drapery, and the purity and originality of its conception, combine to make it

"The unruffled image of the loveliest dream,
That ever left the sky on the deep soul to beam."

It has always been related of this picture that when Malbone showed it to the venerable Benjamin West, then President of the Royal Academy, he told him that he might return to America, for Europe could teach him nothing. Until within a recent period "The Hours" always remained in the possession of Malbone's family in Newport, and was cherished by the artist's sister, Mrs. Whitehorn, with passionate fondness. She was frequently annoyed by the hundreds of strangers who desired to see it, and who had no claim upon her, but she was generally very courteous to any real lover of art who was properly introduced. She never permitted the picture, however, to go out of her own hand. Nearly twenty years ago dire necessity compelled her to offer it in a raffle, for one thousand dollars; and to her delight, and that of the public, she won the picture with the chance she had in it. Some years after her death and her aged husband's, it passed into the permanent possession of the Providence Athenæum.

The chief fame of Malbone rests upon this celebrated picture; but he returned from Europe in 1801, and industriously continued to produce his beautiful works in various cities—everywhere being cherished for his artistic skill, his social charms, and his talents in music and poetry. His severe and incessant labors undermined his health, and at length, in 1806, he vainly sought the healthful breezes of his native Newport; and with equally futile purpose embarked for Jamaica. Knowing that his end was approaching, he survived the homeward voyage to Savannah, but there died in May, 1807, aged thirty-two years, unable to reach the beloved island he yearned to see once more. Thirty years ago the noble works of Washington Allston were gathered in Boston to the delight of thousands of visitors. We believe that rarely gratified pleasure would be derived from the genius of his friend and brother-artist—a collection and exhibition of the miniatures of Malbone.

—Osmond Tiffany.

THE BALL ON THE ICE.

THE heroine of this story is a beautiful and high-spirited girl, whose Christian name is Louise. An orphan from early childhood, she had been adopted by her widowed aunt, the Countess de Pulaski, who lived in a retired chateau in Poland, near the boundary line of Saxony. At the time when the following remarkable adventure took place, Louise was verging on eighteen; and as she would come into possession of a very large fortune on coming of age, the suitors for her hand were numerous and ardent. She was not only rich: I have said she was beautiful and high-spirited; she was also well educated and accomplished,—a fine singer, could play the harp and piano with exquisite feeling; and as for dancing, no girl in the country was considered her rival. Beautiful, accomplished, high-spirited and rich, no wonder her suitors were numerous and ardent!

Among those who visited the chateau in the hope of winning her hand, two were preferred above all the rest—one by the young lady in question, the other by her aunt, a good-hearted but ambitious old lady, whose whole soul was engrossed in schemes for a brilliant marriage for Louise. Captain Fritz, a count by rank and a brave soldier who had won distinction in the war between Prussia and Austria, had the happiness of winning the young lady's heart. He was young, handsome, manly, well educated, and sufficiently endowed with worldly possessions to make him a suitable match for the wealthy heiress. In justice to Louise it must be said that she thought nothing of his wealth. She loved him for himself, and would have loved him just the same had he been as poor as the meanest peasant on her aunt's estates. The Countess de Pulaski, on the contrary, favored the Baron de Wulowski, who was twice as rich and twice as old as Captain Fritz. He had been a great traveler, and had seen much of foreign society; but he was so frivolous and foppish that he was the laughing-stock of all the gentlemen of his acquaintance. Mammams with marriageable daughters regarded him very differently, and thought his great wealth amply compensated for his want of sense. Madame de Pulaski had selected him as a proper husband for Louise, whom, in her own way, she very tenderly loved. Indeed, her very love for her adopted daughter was the cause of her trying to bring about a match which would have made the poor girl unhappy for life.

The good old lady was unable to see why Louise should be so perverse as not to favor a rich and

noble suitor who was anxious to lay himself and all his possessions at her feet.

"Why do you treat Baron Wulowski with such studied neglect, my dear?" the old lady exclaimed one day, when her niece had shown more than usual aversion to his presence. "You know him to be rich, well connected, amiable, and that he loves you to distraction. Besides, you know it is my wish that you should marry him."

"Dear mamma, you know I can't endure the sight of him. It almost drives me crazy to have him hanging round."

"But," persisted the old lady, "you forget how rich he is."

"No, I do not; but I do not care. I detest him!"

"But he is so kind-hearted and amiable."

"Amiable!" exclaimed Louise, with energy. "I hate an amiable man, who thinks everything I do is perfection and can't be provoked into a passion. I did my best to-day to make the baron angry, and only succeeded in making him look silly. If I had said half as much to Captain Fritz—"

"Well?" queried the old lady, half-vexed and yet half-amused, as Louise suddenly stopped. "What if you had said half as much to Captain Fritz?"

"He would have gone off in a rage, and I should have liked him all the better for it."

"I do not think you ever tried that experiment on Captain Fritz."

"I never feel like provoking him, as I do toward the baron."

"My dear girl, you know both gentlemen will be here this evening, and I want you to have a little consideration for my feelings, if you have none for the baron's. You know my wishes and hopes respecting him; and while I shall never attempt to force you into marriage with a man whom you do not love, I am perfectly sure that your aversion for the baron proceeds from no settled dislike, and that it may in time, when you know him better, change to a more reasonable feeling."

"I am sure I shall never—"

"We will not discuss the matter any further to-day, my child. Go, now, and dress for dinner."

Evening came, and brought quite a large number of ladies and gentlemen who were accustomed to attend Madame Pulaski's weekly receptions during the winter. Her elegant chateau, adorned with everything that culture, taste and money could command, was the rendezvous for the gentry for miles around; and never had her receptions been so well attended as now, when Louise was making her *début* in society. All the young gentlemen were deeply in love with her, and every young lady was at once anxious to have her marry out of the way, because every one was in love with the gay and dashing Captain Fritz. If she would only marry the baron, and settle down into a quiet domestic life! But what if she should marry Fritz? So Madame Pulaski had many allies in her scheme. Even the other mammams were willing to aid her, as it was well known that she favored the baron's suit, and Louise's opposition was regarded as a childish whim.

During the evening Madame Pulaski continued to keep the captain and Louise apart, and made them both thoroughly unhappy, though this was far from her intent. The baron was in a much happier frame of mind. Louise was apparently the gayest and most light-hearted creature in the world, and the baron had the vanity to imagine that it was wholly on his account, for the aunt had given him to understand that her niece was coming round to her own views in regard to the captain. The good old lady intended no deception, but she was apt to believe things were as she wished they might be, and also misinterpreted Louise's ready obedience to her request to treat the baron with greater consideration. Poor man! Had he been blessed with a little more sense, he would have seen that she was laughing at him all the time with her eyes, and her very smile would have made him miserable. Love is blind, they say; it is not half so blind as vanity. Even Fritz, inwardly fretting and fuming because he could not get a word with Louise, was not at all discomfited, when she walked leaning on his rival's arm; for their eyes exchanged glances, and the captain at once comprehended the situation. "Ah, well," he thought, with a little twinge of envy in his heart, "all's well that ends well. If he has the old lady on his side, I have the young lady on mine, and I'll back a young, true heart any day against an old head."

Comforting himself with this sage reflection, the young captain leaned his elbow on a mantelpiece,

and straightway fell into a brown study as to the ways and means of carrying on the campaign. The old lady, he mused, is the citadel to be stormed. If neither regular approaches nor direct assaults will avail, he must resort to stratagem. But in what way? This was the rut. The gallant captain was in a decided quandary, when a fragment of conversation struck his ear.

"It was a most audacious robbery, and I hear that the band, after plundering the chateau, made their escape into the forest without the loss of a single man. The *gens d'armes* pursued them the next day, but were compelled to return without effecting their capture."

"But I am told the people of the chateau were not molested."

"No, they were treated with the greatest courtesy. The leader of the band seemed to be a man of chivalry, and even culture. He assured the ladies that they had nothing to fear, and although it was necessary to bind all the gentlemen and men-servants about the place, the ladies were only locked into the drawing-room until the work of plundering was finished."

"Really, the days of old-fashioned knight-errantry, which was nothing but highway robbery on a Christian pretext, do not seem to be extinct."

"But where will the rascals strike next? The plundered chateau is only half a day's ride from here, and there is no saying when even this elegant building may be surprised and robbed. They could find rich booty here."

"Truly so," thought the captain; "but would they, I wonder, show the same consideration for Louise as they did for the wrinkled old woman at the other chateau? But stop! Here's an idea! Will it work? Dare I do it? Neither Louise nor the old lady is chicken-hearted, or easily scared. It is only three miles to town, and the students are always ready for a lark. I'll do it!"

It was still early in the evening when the captain came to this mysterious resolution; and not long afterward he was missed from the saloon. Inquiry among the servants elicited the fact that he had come to the stable, complaining of a severe headache, and ordering his horse, said he would take a short ride in the open air, and get back before he was missed. The explanation appeared to be natural and satisfactory, and no one but Louise gave the matter more than a passing thought. She, poor girl, feared she had carried matters too far with the baron, and had driven Fritz away.

An hour passed, and still another, and the captain did not appear. Supper was announced. The baron had the pleasure of leading Louise into the elegant supper-room; but all his persuasions could not induce her to taste a mouthful. He was just offering her a glass of wine, when an apparition at the door sent a thrill of horror through the company.

The chateau was in the hands of robbers. The leader, heavily armed, and the upper part of his face hidden by a black mask, stood in the doorway.

"Let nothing on these tables be touched until my men have supped!" he said in a low but firm voice, which seemed accustomed to command. "The chateau is surrounded, and if resistance is offered, or any one attempts to escape, it will be burned to the ground. Here, bind every man fast."

At the word three men in masks entered the supper-room, and with small but stout cords immediately proceeded to bind all the gentlemen. Every one submitted quietly except the baron, who seemed to have lost his wits and courage altogether. Trembling from head to foot, he fell on his knees before the leader, and besought him to spare his life, offering his purse and richly jeweled rings as a ransom.

"I shall take them any way," replied the robber, spurning them with his foot, "life or no life. Hold out your hands!" In a moment he was fast bound. "Now out of the way, you hound."

Terror-stricken, the baron stumbled out of the way, and chanced to fall on the floor directly in front of old Lady de Pulaski: "Oh, madame!" exclaimed the unhappy man, "they say these wild people respect ladies. They will not harm you! They will do what you ask! Pray intercede for me! These cords cut my wrists dreadfully: they will be loosened if you ask it. O these cords! Say I am your son! That I am going to marry your daughter! Say—"

"Marry my daughter, indeed!" exclaimed the indignant old lady; "my daughter shall never marry a coward."

"Stop howling there, or I'll put a gag in your mouth!" cried the leader of the band. The baron